

PLAN ELEMENTS

The Rainbow Valley Area Plan establishes comprehensive goals, objectives, and policies that are derived from numerous comments obtained from community workshops, stakeholder meetings, telephone conversations, letters, and emailed remarks. The goals, objectives, and policies help support and implement *Eye to the Future 2020*, the Maricopa County Comprehensive Plan.

Using the Comprehensive Plan’s format, including five new required elements, the Area Plan elements are organized within eight subject areas.

- Land Use
- Transportation
- Environment/Environmental Effects
- Economic Development
- Growth Areas
- Open Space
- Water Resources
- Cost of Development

Several general definitions should be used to help understand these eight subject areas:

Goal: A concise statement describing a condition to be achieved. It does not suggest specific actions, but describes a desired outcome.

Objective: An achievable step towards a goal. Progress towards an objective can be measured and is generally time dependent.

Policy: A specific statement to guide public and private decision-making. It is derived from the goals and objectives of the plan.

The goals, objectives, and policies are the action components of this area plan. Therefore, determination of land use on any specific parcel must be in conformance with the goals, objectives, and policies contained in this plan.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

The following goals, objectives, and policies are designed to achieve specific outcomes in the Rainbow Valley Area Plan.

Land Use

Goal L1: *Promote efficient land development that is compatible with adjacent land uses, is well integrated with the transportation system, and is sensitive to the natural environment.*

Objective L1.1: Encourage the timely and orderly expansion of the Urban Service Area.

Policy L1.1.1: New urban development outside of the Urban Service Area will be discouraged, unless part of a development master plan.

Policy L1.1.2: Encourage the location of rural density residential development (less than one dwelling unit per acre) in areas where infrastructure to support higher density

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housing is lacking, and where natural environmental conditions suggest low intensity development.

Policy L1.1.3: Encourage preservation of existing agricultural land.

Policy L1.1.4: Encourage federal, state, and local agency cooperation and coordination for area planning efforts.

Objective L1.2: Create high quality residential, commercial, and industrial land developments that are compatible with adjacent land uses.

Policy L1.2.1: Encourage developers to cooperate and communicate with residents during any development review process for construction near the property holdings of those residents.

Policy L1.2.2: In addition to normal site plan review, development proposals along major streets and adjacent to existing and approved land uses will be reviewed to determine compatibility with those uses.

Policy L1.2.3: Large scale development applications which will greatly impact current population, housing, land use projections and distributions must be thoroughly considered with the effects noted on the current plan.

Policy L1.2.4: Support policies, legislation, and other efforts to ensure that building codes and grading regulations regarding manufactured home development are enforced, thereby enhancing overall quality of homes and home sites.

Policy L1.2.5: Encourage enforcement of disclosure requirement, which requires full disclosure of any lack of public services, when parcel splitting occurs.

Policy L1.2.6: Encourage residential development that provides adequate buffers between industrial, commercial, or active agricultural areas to protect residents from potentially incompatible uses.

POLICY L1.2.7: ENCOURAGE NEW COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT THAT IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RAINBOW VALLEY AREA PLAN AND RESPECTIVE COMMERCIAL LAND USE GUIDELINES.

Objective L1.3: Preserve the scenic and rural character of the Rainbow Valley planning area.

Policy L1.3.1: Discourage the location of commercial centers or industrial developments in locations specified for development with rural density land uses.

Policy L1.3.2: Encourage low-profile signage on the commercial site for which it pertains, and discourage off site advertising signs.

Policy L1.3.3: Support land uses that are compatible with continued agricultural operations north of the Gila River.

Policy L1.3.4: Preserve nighttime rural character by minimizing lighting of roadways.

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- Policy L1.3.5: Work with the Rainbow Valley community to explore opportunities for rural development guidelines for landscaping, lighting, and/or signage that reflect the rural community or regional character.

Transportation

Goal T1: *Provide an efficient, cost-effective, integrated, accessible, environmentally sensitive, and safe countywide multi-modal system that addresses existing and future roadway networks, as well as promotes transit, bikeways, and pedestrian travel.*

Objective T1.1: Establish a circulation system that provides for the safe, convenient, and efficient movement of goods and people throughout Maricopa County.

- Policy T1.1.1: Support MCDOT efforts to conduct corridor studies that identify future transportation improvement needs.
- Policy T1.1.2: Support MCDOT efforts to identify and mitigate railroad crossings that require an enhanced level of protection.
- Policy T1.1.3: Preserve necessary rights of way for roadways as per current policy, and for equestrian and bike lanes in undeveloped areas.
- Policy T1.1.4: Require the development of an arterial street system based upon the existing section line (grid) pattern unless, as part of approved developments, alternative arterial patterns are deemed superior or more appropriate.
- Policy T1.1.5: Support MCDOT efforts to ensure that new or improved transportation facilities within a community are designed and constructed in a manner consistent with the established values, lifestyle, and long-term land use plans of the community.
- Policy T1.1.6: Support the continued maintenance of roadways and the paving of new and existing local roads consistent with adopted engineering and design standards.
- Policy T1.1.7: Support efforts to provide all-weather travel over washes, INCLUDING LOW WATER CROSSINGS, where justified.
- Policy T1.1.8: Encourage and support the development of safe, efficient alternative travel modes in the Rainbow Valley area including biking and walking, particularly within school service areas.

POLICY T1.1.9: SUPPORT EFFORTS TO IMPROVE RIGGS ROAD FROM RAINBOW VALLEY ROAD TO ITS WESTERN END AND EXTEND RIGGS ROAD TO STATE ROUTE 85.

Environment/Environmental Effects

Goal E1: *Promote development that considers adverse environmental impacts on the natural and cultural environment, preserves highly valued wildlife habitat, and protects historical and archaeological resources.*

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Objective E1.1: Encourage developments that are compatible with significant natural environmental features and which do not lead to their destruction.

- Policy E1.1.1: In order to minimize adverse impacts of hillside development, the submittal of land development applications on lands with slopes of 15 percent or greater should be discouraged and/or recommended to be designated open space areas within large DMPs.
- Policy E1.1.2: Encourage land uses and development designs that are compatible with environmentally sensitive areas such as the Palo Verde-Saguaro community, floodplains, hillsides, ridgelines, wildlife habitat, scenic areas, and unstable geologic and soil conditions.
- Policy E1.1.3: Encourage building envelopes and localized grading, to reduce blading and cut and fill, in environmentally sensitive areas.
- Policy E1.1.4: Encourage the preservation of the scenic quality of the Gila River corridor, Sierra Estrella Mountain foothills, Buckeye Hills foothills, and views of North Maricopa Mountains in the review of applications for land development.
- Policy E1.1.5: In order to protect mountain views in the Rainbow Valley area, promote the use of generous buffering, judicious placement of structures, as well as reasonable height limitations on structures and signs associated with commercial use.
- Policy E1.1.6: Discourage new development in major 100-year floodplains.
- Policy E1.1.7: Support natural drainage corridors and protective buffering techniques along the Gila River, Waterman Wash, and other significant wash systems where new development is proposed to provide flood control, preserve wildlife corridors, and protect open space.
- Policy E1.1.8: Discourage the location of structures which would increase water ponding and sheet flow in areas of extremely flat land and areas susceptible to sheet flow such as elevated railroads, roads and highways, irrigation canals, and flood control channels.
- Policy E1.1.9: Prior to development, excavation, or grading, require the applicant to submit a letter from the Arizona Historic Preservation Officer stating that the proposed land development will have no effect on historical or cultural resources.

Objective E1.2: Improve air quality, water quality, and reduce noise impacts.

- Policy E1.2.1: Support and encourage local and region-wide efforts to preserve air quality.
- Policy E1.2.2: In order to reduce windblown dust, encourage research and support programs to revegetate abandoned farmland in the Rainbow Valley planning area.
- Policy E1.2.3: Support and foster federal, state, and local surface water and groundwater quality management programs to reduce pollutants in rivers, streams, and groundwater.

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Policy E1.2.4: Support and encourage organization of local Volunteer Poses through the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office to patrol neighborhoods and enforce traffic laws to reduce dust and noise associated with illegal ATV activities.

Policy E1.2.5: Discourage the construction of dirt roads caused by unplanned lot splitting.

Objective E1.3: Preserve significant habitat areas for wildlife and desert plant species.

Policy E1.3.1: In conjunction with new development, encourage cooperation with the AGFD and the USFWS in order to prevent encroachment on the riparian vegetation and/or channels associated with the Gila River or Waterman Wash.

Policy E1.3.2: Encourage the use of replacement vegetation that is indigenous to the Palo Verde-Saguaro plant community for any land development that disturbs that community. In addition, promote active efforts that discourage establishment and proliferation of on and off-site noxious weeds.

Policy E1.3.3: In conjunction with new development, encourage and support voluntary citizen efforts to salvage and replant cactuses and other desert plants in public spaces, neighborhoods, and abandoned roads.

Policy E1.3.4: Support federal, state, and local efforts to protect the Gila River, Waterman Wash, and other significant drainage ways from development, and encourage efforts to enhance riparian habitat in selected areas.

Policy E1.3.5: Encourage cooperation with the Arizona Game and Fish Department to protect desert tortoise habitat and minimize disturbance of desert tortoises from development, all-terrain vehicles, and illegal collectors.

Economic Development

Goal ED1: *Promote a growing, balanced, efficient, and diversified economy, consistent with available resources, that enhances quality employment opportunities, improves quality of life, and is sensitive to the natural and cultural environment.*

Objective ED1.1: Permit major commercial and employment centers where the labor force and infrastructure exist or are planned.

Policy ED1.1.1: Encourage commercial development only when its demand can be justified and with the provision that construction will be completed on the proposed facilities within a specified time period.

Policy ED1.1.2: Encourage commercial development in areas currently zoned for such activity and in areas that are a portion of a large scale or planned development, provided that proposed acreage may be supported by surrounding population.

Policy ED1.1.3: Discourage strip commercial development.

Policy ED1.1.4: Encourage neighborhood commercial development at the MC-85/Jackrabbit Trail intersection, outside of the 100-year floodplain.

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Policy ED1.1.5: Encourage industrial development on property zoned industrial prior to rezoning of additional property for industrial use.

Policy ED1.1.6: Require proposed industrial and commercial operations with salvage or storage yard activities to be screened from public view.

Policy ED1.1.7: In conjunction with any modification requiring building permit issuance, require existing industrial and commercial operations with salvage or storage yard activities to be screened from public view.

Objective ED1.2: In mixed use developments with densities greater than one dwelling unit per acre create a land use environment that generates a diversified economic base which fosters varied employment opportunities, and encourages business formation and expansion.

Policy ED1.2.1: In the review of large scale development applications where the application will greatly effect current population, housing, and land use projections and distribution, the impacts of the application must be thoroughly considered and the effects on the current plan noted.

Objective ED1.3: Improve housing conditions in the Rainbow Valley planning area.

Policy ED1.3.1: Promote efforts to enhance housing quality in manufactured home communities.

Policy ED1.3.2: Promote, encourage, and participate in housing rehabilitation and neighborhood improvement programs.

Policy ED1.3.3: Develop land use guidelines that encourage suitable locations for new residences and help ensure that appropriate access and services are provided.

Growth Areas

Goal G.1: *Promote orderly, timely, and fiscally responsible growth in Maricopa County.*

Objective G.1.1: Encourage timely, orderly, and fiscally responsible growth within the General Plan Development Areas, within specially identified areas of County Area Plans intended for higher intensity use, and within mixed use Development Master Plans.

Policy G1.1.1: Residential development with gross densities greater than 1.0 dwelling unit per acre shall be located within the Urban Service Area, where a community water and sanitary sewer system can be provided.

Policy G.1.1.2: New urban development (exceeding one dwelling unit per acre) shall provide evidence of adequate services and infrastructure to meet the needs of future residents.

Objective G.1.2: Evaluate growth areas to ensure continued feasibility and effectiveness.

Policy G1.2.1: Continue to update the Rainbow Valley Area Plan to determine appropriate growth areas.

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Policy G1.2.2: Periodically review General Plan Development Areas as they relate to growth areas, and make changes as necessary.

Objective G.1.3: Maintain cooperation with stakeholders to help ensure that future growth is coordinated in an efficient manner.

Policy G.1.3.1: Work with residents and other stakeholders in the review of future growth and development.

Policy G.1.3.2: Encourage coordination between developers and school districts for future school site planning.

Open Space

Goal O1: *Maintain and, where necessary, encourage expanding the open space system for Maricopa County to address public access, connectivity, education, preservation, buffering, quantity, quality, and diversity for regionally significant open spaces.*

Objective O1.1: Promote physical and visual public access to open space resources.

Policy O1.1.1: Encourage efforts to protect and improve public access to open space resources.

Policy O1.1.2: Promote development that considers preservation of mountain views.

Objective O1.2: Establish regional open space connectivity and linkages for both recreation and wildlife purposes.

Policy O1.2.1: Coordinate trail linkages in new developments with Flood Control District projects and other open space projects and/or resources.

Policy O1.2.2: Encourage development of trails along the Gila River, Waterman Wash, other significant washes, and canals as multiple use linkages throughout the region.

Policy O1.2.3: Coordinate with the City of Goodyear, the Town of Buckeye, local irrigation districts, and other jurisdictions in planning for future local and regional trails.

Policy O1.2.4: Where roads must cross washes, design all road crossings to minimize disturbance to the natural environment, and to accommodate identified trails.

Policy O1.2.5: Encourage preservation of Palo Verde-Saguaro plant communities to serve as major links between regionally significant open space resources and, where appropriate, smaller areas of foothills and flatlands to provide connectivity and transition functions.

Policy O1.2.6: Encourage integration and consideration of the Maricopa County Regional Trail system into future development.

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Objective O1.3: Protect and enhance environmentally sensitive areas, including mountains and steep slopes; rivers and significant washes; historic, cultural, and archeological resources; view corridors; sensitive desert; and significant wildlife habitat and ecosystems.

Policy O1.3.1: Conserve mountainous areas that contain important wildlife habitats, cultural resources, and scenic areas.

Policy O1.3.2: Discourage development in environmentally sensitive areas, on ridge or crestlines, and on steep slopes.

Policy O1.3.3: Encourage the use of native plant material for all types of landscaping in environmentally sensitive areas, including the Palo Verde-Saguaro plant community.

Policy O1.3.4: Explore implementation of flexible zoning techniques that promote open space preservation.

Objective O1.4: Encourage appropriate open space between communities and other land uses.

Policy O1.4.1: Promote transitional land uses around mountainous areas, open space linkages, and public access points with lower intensity uses closer to these areas.

Policy O1.4.2: Encourage density transitions to separate rural from urbanized areas and to buffer preserve areas, such as the Sonoran Desert National Monument, from urbanized areas.

Objective O1.5: Improve quantity, quality, and diversity of open space and recreational opportunities.

Policy O1.5.1: Protect significant cultural resources on developable lands from degradation by encouraging sensitive development or public acquisition.

Policy O1.5.2: Monitor and coordinate with the State Land Department, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Arizona Game and Fish Department regarding classification, exchange, disposal, and acquisition of lands under their management.

Policy O1.5.3: Support additional monitoring programs of open space areas to reduce damage from uncontrolled off-road activities and illegal dumping.

Objective O1.6: Promote the economic and quality of life benefits of open space.

Policy O1.6.1: Encourage communication efforts with open space stakeholders to share information and discussion on current issues and/or projects.

Policy O1.6.2: Discuss and encourage open space preservation with applicants during the zoning and subdivision process.

Policy O1.6.3: Support and encourage efforts to preserve agricultural land where deemed appropriate.

POLICY O1.6.4: PARTNER WITH STAKEHOLDERS TO IMPLEMENT THE EL RIO MASTER PLAN TO RESTORE THE GILA RIVER, PROVIDE RECREATIONAL TRAILS, AND ENHANCE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES IN THE REGION.

Water Resources

Goal W1: *Promote development that makes conservative use of renewable water supplies such as effluent, surface water, and Central Arizona Project water when feasible, and that uses groundwater as the primary water source only in the absence of renewable sources.*

Objective W1.1: Encourage protection and enhancement of renewable water and groundwater supplies within the framework of state and federal laws, regulations, and guidelines for existing and future needs.

Policy W1.1.1: Encourage developments that maximize recharge of groundwater supplies and utilize treated wastewater for irrigation of golf courses, neighborhood and community parks, and roadway right-of-ways.

Policy W1.1.2: Encourage the reuse of treated industrial wastewater when feasible.

Policy W1.1.3: Encourage compliance with Arizona Department of Water Resources programs, rules, and regulations for new development and for water conservation.

Policy W1.1.4: Proof of long-term future water supply will be required prior to development approval.

Policy W1.1.5: Encourage provisions for community wastewater treatment and reuse of effluent for new urban development (exceeding one dwelling unit per acre).

Policy W1.1.6: Encourage compliance with Arizona Department of Environmental Quality standards for effluent treatment and reuse.

Policy W1.1.7: Support ongoing studies of the waterlogged conditions in the Buckeye Water Conservation and Drainage District to determine exemptions from irrigation water duties and conservation requirements.

Goal W2: *Reduce the impacts of development on water quality, land subsidence, and riparian habitat.*

Objective W2.1: Promote the protection and preservation of riparian areas within the framework of state and federal laws, regulations, and guidelines.

Policy W2.1.1: Consider incentives and options for preservation of riparian areas.

Policy W2.1.2: Support the El Rio Vision watercourse master plan along the Gila River to help restore the river to its natural state, increase cleanup efforts, and improve flood control.

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Policy W2.1.3: Support ongoing depth to groundwater monitoring conducted by the Arizona Department of Water Resources to assess water levels and water quality throughout the Phoenix Active Management Area.

Objective W2.2: Encourage the reduction of pollutants in rivers, streams, and washes within the framework of state and federal laws, regulations, and guidelines.

Policy W2.2.1: Encourage development which complies with the Arizona aquifer protection program.

Policy W2.2.2: Encourage the use of crop fertilization, pest management practices, and animal waste disposal methods that reduce the risk of groundwater and surface water contamination.

Cost of Development

Goal C1: *Ensure that new development pays its fair and proportional share of the cost of additional public facility and service needs generated by new development.*

Objective C1.1: Develop a method to determine the need for, and assess costs of, new facilities and services required to serve new development in order to maintain service levels.

Policy C1.1.1: Work with other County agencies and affected stakeholders to establish cost sharing programs.

Policy C1.1.2: Work to ensure that the proportional share charged to a project includes only those costs associated with the infrastructure and service needs of that project.

Policy C1.1.3: Seek regional coordination to promote developer cost sharing for regional services and infrastructure.

Objective C1.2: Adopt and implement level of service standards for new development to help promote consistency and certainty in the cost sharing process.

Policy C1.2.1: Maintain and support Maricopa County's capital improvement programs that help promote service needs and standards.

Policy C1.2.2: Adopt and periodically update level of service standards for new development to maintain their viability.

Objective C1.3: Identify and monitor cost sharing programs for potentially adverse impacts.

Policy C1.3.1: Identify and periodically review administrative costs created by cost sharing programs to determine ongoing practicality.

Policy C1.3.2: Identify and monitor cost sharing programs for potentially negative impacts on affordable housing efforts.

Policy C1.3.3: Periodically review cost sharing programs to ensure consistency with federal and state laws and court decisions.